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# Employment rose by 29,000 during the peak holiday period

Media Release

Released 18/02/2021

**i** Source: [Labour Force, Australia, January 2021](#)

Seasonally adjusted employment increased by 29,000 people between December 2020 and January 2021 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

## Employment and hours worked

Bjorn Jarvis, head of labour statistics at the ABS, said this latest data showed a continued recovery in the labour market into the new year.

"January 2021 was the fourth consecutive monthly rise in employment, as employment in Victoria continued to recover. Nationally, employment was only 59,000 people lower than March 2020, having fallen by 872,000 people early in the pandemic."

This contrasted with seasonally adjusted hours worked, which declined between December and January (a fall of 4.9 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms), as more people than usual took annual leave over the summer.

"After a tough 2020, more Australians than usual took leave in the first two weeks of January, particularly full-time workers," Mr Jarvis said.

"This fall in hours worked is different to the falls across April and May 2020, which resulted from the restrictions in the labour market, rather than people taking leave. However, the number of employed people who worked zero hours in early January in the capital cities also reflects some ongoing effects of recent lockdowns in Sydney and Melbourne."

## Unemployment and participation

Seasonally adjusted unemployment decreased in January by 34,000 people. The

unemployment rate decreased 0.2 percentage points to 6.4 per cent.

The participation rate declined 0.1 percentage points to 66.1 per cent, but remained close to the historical high in December.

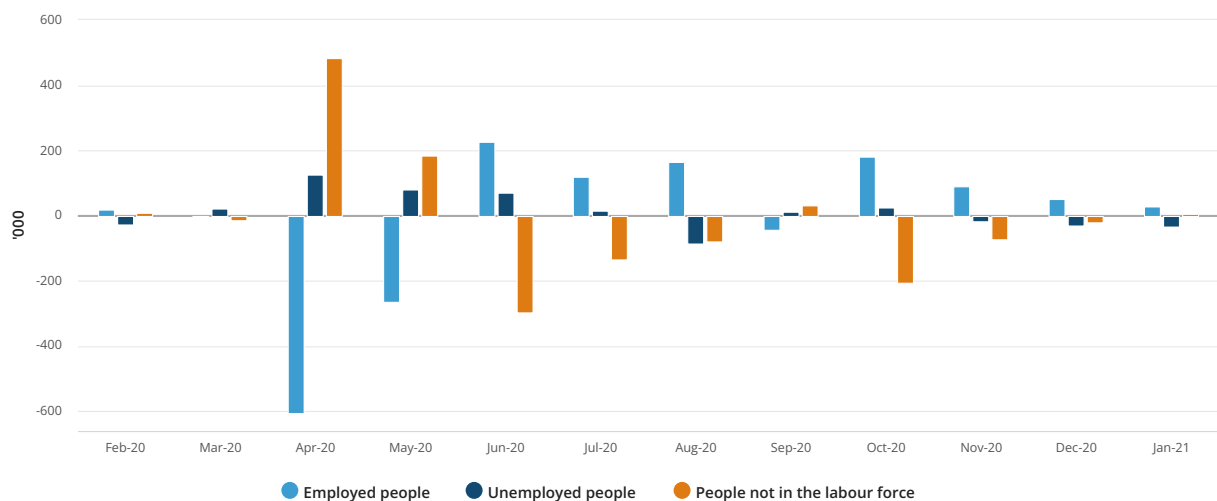
The youth unemployment rate remained at 13.9 per cent in January, and the youth participation rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 68.4 per cent.

### Underutilisation

The underemployment rate fell 0.4 percentage points to 8.1 per cent, the fourth consecutive monthly fall. This was 0.7 percentage points lower than March 2020 (8.8 per cent) and reflected a larger than usual fall in the number of part-time workers who preferred more hours.

The underutilisation rate, which combines the unemployment and underemployment rates, fell 0.6 percentage points to 14.5 per cent, 0.5 percentage points higher than its March 2020 level (14.0 per cent).

### Monthly changes in key labour populations, Australia



Today's release of Labour Force, Australia includes [additional analysis of hours worked \(/articles/insights-hours-worked-january-2021\)](#) (including comparisons of the original and seasonally adjusted series and people working less hours) and [analysis of full-time and part-time employment \(/articles/understanding-full-time-and-part-time-work\)](#) (including how these measures are defined).

Further information, including regional labour market information, will be available in the upcoming January 2021 issue of [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release\)](#), due for release on Thursday 25 February 2021.

The ABS would like to thank Australians for their continued support in responding to our surveys during such a difficult time.

## Media notes

- People in the Labour Force are either employed, or unemployed. In order to be unemployed, people must be actively looking for work, and available to start work during the reference week.
- The 'youth' age group refers to 15-24 year olds.
- The numbers in the media release are rounded to the nearest thousand people. For more detailed numbers see the data downloads tab in the [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#) publication.
- The ABS has suspended publishing trend series for the COVID-19 period.
- Further information on additional labour market statistics can be found in '[Measuring the labour market impacts of COVID-19 \(/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Measuring%20Labour%20Market%20COVID19\)](#)'; part of the suite of information available on the ABS website.
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